

Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 MC-02 AID-20 COME-00

OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /182 W

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R 191339Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4939

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

LL SCLND

ON EC BRUSSELS 0624

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

EUCOM

UNCLAS LONDON 12172

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS BRITISH ARMS EMBARGO

REF: LONDON 12037

1. AFTER A LONG AND EMOTIONALLY CHARGED DEBATE, THE

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HOUSE OF COMMONS LAST NIGHT ENDORSED THE GOVERNMENT'S

ARMS EMBARGO TO THE MIDDLE EAST. THE FINAL VOTE, 251-175, WAS MARKED BY NUMEROUS ABSTENTIONS AND DEFECTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HOUSE.

2. IN A MASTERFUL PRESENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CASE, FOREIGN SECRETARY DOUGLAS-HOME ASSERTED THAT IT WAS A PARAMOUNT BRITISH INTEREST TO SEE THE WAR STOPPED AND THAT BRITAIN HAD A KEY DIPLOMATIC ROLE TO PLAY. IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT, HE ARGUED, THAT BRITAIN PRESERVE ITS ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE ARAB STATES LEST IN THE HEAT OF EMOTION THEY TAKE ACTIONS DAMAGING TO THE WESTERN WORLD AND AGAINST THEIR OWN BEST INTERESTS. WITH ALL THIS AT STAKE, HE INSISTED, THE EMBARGO WAS RIGHT FOR THE PRESENT. THE MOST HE WOULD CONCEDE TO HIS CRITICS WAS A PROMISE TO KEEP THE EMBARGO UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW AND A SOLEMN PLEDGE THAT BRITAIN WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY RISK TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL ITSELF.

3. IN THE ENSUING DEBATE, ARAB AND ISRAELI SYMPATHIZERS EXCHANGED BITTER CHARGES THAT CUT ACROSS PARTY LINES. MANY MPS FOUND THEMSELVES TAKING POSITIONS ON THIS ISSUE AT VARIANCE WITH THEIR USUAL POSITIONS ON OTHER ISSUES, AND MANY MORE EXPLAINED AND QUALIFIED THEIR STANDS TO THE POINT WHERE THEIR EVENTUAL VOTE WAS IRRELEVANT. AT THE DIVISION, OVER 200 MPS ABSTAINED OR ABSENTED THEMSELVES, AND THIRTY-TWO (17 CONSERVATIVES AND 15 LABORITES) VOTED AGAINST THEIR OWN LEADERSHIP.

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